

# Increasing Physical Activity for Veterans with Physical or Medical Limitations

## Do I need to see my healthcare provider before beginning a program of physical activity?

Many veterans can begin a program of mild or moderate activity **safely** without having a check-up from their primary care provider. Your *MOVE!* healthcare team can tell you whether or not you should have a check-up before starting. In general, the following veterans should always see their provider before starting:

- Veterans with heart and/or lung conditions
- Veterans planning a program of “vigorous” activity



## What is the difference between “mild”, “moderate”, and “vigorous” levels of activity?

- Mild activities should feel like slow walking. They should not cause much of a sweat or cause you to have trouble catching your breath.
- Moderate activities are like fast walking. These activities will make your heart beat a little bit faster. This may cause light sweating but should never cause you to be “out of breath” or exhausted.
- Vigorous activities such as running will cause the heart to beat very fast. With these activities, you will sweat heavily and have some difficulty breathing.



# **Increasing Physical Activity for Veterans with Physical or Medical Limitations**

## **Are there certain activities I should avoid?**

Regardless of your limitations, very few activities are “off-limits”. See the *MOVE!* handout, “Activity Limitations for Certain Medical Conditions”.

## **Will I make my condition worse by exercising?**

Physical activity almost always helps improve medical conditions. It is wise to avoid or reduce physical activity during times when your condition worsens or causes distress.

## **Will my medicines affect my ability to be physically active?**

Physical activity is compatible with all medications. However, some medications require a close watch. Refer to the *MOVE!* handout, “Physical Activity and Medications”.

## **What if I’m in too much pain to be physically active?**

Regular physical activity often improves chronic pain conditions. It can sometimes take several weeks to begin to see a benefit. See your healthcare provider to discuss options if you feel your current pain is at a level that will keep you from even getting started with physical activity.

